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Organization:

Title:

Comments: I write to you to submit comments on the above-noted proposal, which I strongly oppose. I have been a resident of Albuquerque for nearly 30 years, and am extremely familiar with the area in which the proposed project would be built (as well as the area many miles in all directions from it).

I am aware of some of the comments made by other persons opposing the proposal, such as the additional traffic, noise and trash it will generate; and a further fragmentation of what is a beloved wilderness area [mdash] and I support those comments unequivocally. I cannot say that the project is geared more to tourists than local residents, but the proponent(s) of it plainly seek to dramatically increase the flow of tourists, something that will be taxing to the area.

Among the key points made by the sponsor(s) in support of the mountain coaster are that: it will create an incredible new experience for tram riders, including skiers, hikers and bikers; and that it will provide a year round activity option that is non-weather-dependent. These points sound far more like carnival barker sales pitches than analyses of how the wonderful environment that already exists will be affected.

An "incredible" new experience could range from a large ski jump, to an outdoor pole-dancing stage, to a huge heated swimming pool, etc., etc. I think the vast majority of hikers, bikers, and others who have used the area over the past many years already find being there to be an incredible experience. Moreover, they would definitely be outraged about the loss of two runs at which is already a comparatively small ski area, and the disruption of the biking and hiking trail that's there.

With respect to a year round activity option that is not weather dependent, the assertion borders on the ridiculous. The area is already used on a year round basis, with minimal negative effects on the forest and mountain environment (both in and near the ski area, and on the area's East-facing slopes that have snow play areas. It would be no more non-weather dependent than the existing ski area, and doubtless less so given the maintenance of the coaster vehicles.

It should also be noted that the proposed access to the coaster ride is [mdash] for much of the year [mdash] via the Sandia Tramway. That wonderful service is already heavily used, by locals and visitors alike, and, among other things, serves the longstanding (albeit physically replaced) restaurant at the summit. The tram operates at maximum occupancy already, let alone being proposed for added use by throngs of tourists wanting to use the coaster.

As the proponents note, there are already 5 mountain coaster-type rides in Colorado (many more elsewhere) that the tourist throngs to which the proponents are appealing can travel to. Traveling to get that "incredible new experience" elsewhere is something tourists can readily accommodate.

What cannot be accommodated is a dramatic increase in non-natural activities that will harm the wonderful, natural environment of which the proponents' current activities are a comfortable part.